



Cantabrian Girls Ex-Students' Association

President Dr Rita Crews OAM
rcrews@ozemail.com.au
Phone: (02) 9744 2654

Secretary: Ms Kathie Burgess
ekaterini.burgess@det.nsw.edu.au

Treasurer Mrs Gwen Ng
gwen.r.ng@gmail.com

Web: www.canterburgh.schools.nsw.edu.au

NOVEMBER 2024 Newsletter

Dear Members:

Welcome to our November 2024 Newsletter! I hope it finds you well and that you enjoy the short update on what has been happening with the Cantabrian Girls Ex-Students' Association, AKA COG (Canterbury Old Girls!).



Like last year, I would like to begin by welcoming our newest members, the CGHS graduating class of 2024. Congratulations on your graduation! We are continuing our offer of membership to all the 2024 graduates. You are now part of the COG community and your membership will continue for free until the end of 2025. All you need to do is email me your personal email (to: ekaterini.burgess@det.nsw.edu.au) and let me know that you would like to take up this offer, and we hope you remain with us for a very long time!!

It was great to once again see our Association represented at the Year 12 Graduation by our President. Dr Crews was witness to a lovely celebration of six years of high school, with much joy and pride shown by their teachers and families. The musical items once again were a highlight, showcasing Year 12s amazing talent and was loved by all present.



Following this auspicious occasion, our Association had its own special day, our Bring and Buy afternoon. The Committee worked very hard to ensure the day was a success. We were pleased to see many of you take the



opportunity to buy some of the goods on sale, where the proceeds will be much appreciated. We managed to raise almost \$500 during the afternoon, which of course will all go towards our Cantabrian Scholarship and annual Dux Prizes. I know CGHS values our contributions and the Scholarship recipients are always worthy and grateful for the assistance given. The Committee will once again be requesting applications from Year 10 students over the next few weeks, so that we can award the \$800 scholarship

Along with the Bring and Buy aspect of the afternoon, those who attended enjoyed the lovely afternoon tea and were particularly excited by being able to tour their old school. All who came valued this wonderful opportunity to visit their old classrooms, see how things had changed, see some of the archives that were displayed and admire some recent student artwork that was included in the sale of items.

I especially enjoyed just chatting with everyone. It was great to see some new faces and many regulars and I hope everyone else that came along had a great time also. We were a little disappointed with the small attendance and would like to make an appeal to all members for suggestions on what type of function they would like to see in 2025. If you have any ideas on how you would like to change the Association or what we can do to improve please let us know. You can email me at any time, we would love to hear any suggestions you have.



Regardless of whether you can make our functions/meetings or not we very much appreciate your membership contributions. Unfortunately, **we have had to increase the fee to \$30 for three years**, however, I am sure all would agree this is still a bargain!! Don't forget to ask any school friends or potential 'Friends of COG' (this includes any person who has not been a former student or teacher of Canterbury Girls High School but is keen to support the aims of the Association) to please join. There are many members whose membership has recently lapsed, so I will be emailing you invoices in the near future to remind you of any fees due.



To finish off, I would like to make yet another request for anyone who would like to share their story with our members. If you are interested please consider submitting a short history about yourself at school and/or beyond. You can email me so I can include in our Our Stories section of a future newsletter. For this edition, I have copied our former President's story (Merle Chalmers) submitted to the CGHS Alumni Project.

Good bye for now, I hope everyone stays well and has a wonderful summer.

Yours Sincerely,
Kathie Burgess
Secretary
Cantabrian Girls Ex-students' Association



From the President

I was again impressed with the Year 12 Graduation that I attended on behalf of our Association on the 26th September. It was rewarding to see so many students receive awards for academic and sporting achievements as well as our own annual award. The atmosphere was electric with so much support shown by the the Year 12 girls, their families and friends. I am looking forward to attending the High Achievers' assembly next February.

It is only through your support that we can continue to finance the scholarships and Dux prizes that are so valued by the recipients.

I would like to thank our wonderful Secretary and Committee for their support and hard work in keeping COG alive and well. As members, remember that your thoughts and ideas are always welcome.

Compliments of the season to you all.

OUR STORIES

Merle Chalmers (nee Talman 1954)

(ex-president of Cantabrian Girls Ex-Students Association)

In 1953 at Wiley Park Primary School a choice had to be made by my parents as to where I started high school the next year, Marrickville Girls High or Canterbury Girls Home Science School. I had no say in the matter, however two of our neighbours girls were attending Canterbury and so Mum decided that would be where I would go. How grateful am I that she did!

In the January before school began we went into the City to purchase the navy blue three box pleat uniform needed together with the velour hat and white short sleeved blouses. The school badges and hat band together with the PE uniform were purchased from the school.

In 1954 we still had three term years and so my first term saw me in 1A with a whole lot of girls I did not know, many coming from the closer surrounding primary schools. I wasn't the only newcomer to the school though, as both the Headmistress (Miss E Stark) and the Deputy Headmistress (Miss L Armstrong) began as the leaders of the school that year. There was a huge contrast between the two, Miss Stark small and soft spoken and Miss Armstrong tall with a commanding voice.

First Year saw us studying English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Physiology, Cooking and Home Management, Sewing, Music and also Library. The subjects I least enjoyed were cooking and sewing, but I knew that we only had to do cooking for one year and then we would be able to choose typing or shorthand and typing and business principles. At the end of term 1 the Education Department said that Physiology was no longer to be taught and instead we started studying Biology.

There were four sports houses, Adelaide (blue), Brisbane (yellow), Canberra (green) and Darwin (red). I



was placed into Adelaide which was great as blue was and still is my favourite colour. Sport was my best thing as I was already playing tennis at Inter District level and A grade in senior comps. My cooking teacher was in Adelaide and enjoyed tennis so I was very lucky in that she did help me a lot in the cooking area.

In second year I was elected Adelaide Junior House Captain and in third year Senior House Captain. I took this job very seriously and I realise now how learning to encourage girls to participate in the annual athletic and swimming carnivals helped me in my job, leading a team of 5 other people to achieve work objectives.

We didn't have many excursions but I do remember being in the choir and singing in a mass school choir for the Red Cross. Also we were taken to Newtown to see a Shakespearean Play -The Twelfth Night. At the end of the performance we were taken backstage to meet the actors. I met Leonard Teale who played Superman in a radio series later on, he also became a well known actor in many Australian films.

Our school did not have a MP Hall and so when Presentation Day came around at the end of year we all went to the Campsie Odeon picture theatre for the day. I have stood up on the stage there and made a speech and Miss Armstrong was the one who helped me prepare for that. She showed me how to correctly speak into the microphone and how to project my voice. I think she must have had some stage training.

In Third year I was elected Senior Prefect as well as being Adelaide House Captain (the first time that this had occurred). We attended a Nationalisation Ceremony that year at the local council chambers and I gave a welcoming speech there and got my name in the local paper. I still have the clipping.

The year 1956 was very exciting for two reasons. One was that the Olympic Games were to be held in Melbourne for the first time and I had both an uncle and cousin competing. The other reason was that television was now available for the first time in Australia to coincide with the Olympic Games.

We sat for the intermediate certificate in those days and we all expected after finishing that there would be a job somewhere for us. In December I applied to the AMP Society for a job and had to have an interview in January. I started with them at the end of January and worked there for seven years until I got married because in those days they did not employ married women and so I had to leave.

I need to thank my Business Principles/Bookkeeping teacher Miss Robbins who continued to tell us for 2 years that learning these subjects would be our "bread and butter" when we started working and although I didn't need the bookkeeping to much later when my husband and I had a business, the business principles part helped to construct correspondence in my job.

After leaving school, and starting work, a few of us from school decided to attend Night College to improve our shorthand and typing. We did this for 12 months at Belmore Tech. We were surprised to find that our teacher for these subjects was Mrs Little who had taught us the year before at Canterbury.

In my business life I have been a general typist, secretary, office manager, properties officer, and Manager of a Unit with 8 staff. I believe I have been able to achieve all this because of the basic good teaching received at school which prepared me for all the jobs in some way. However you still need to be an ongoing learner through life and in doing that you may achieve more than you thought possible. I enjoyed my three years at Canterbury Girls School and thank all the teachers who took the time to guide, teach and set examples for us to follow.

In 1983 I saw an ad in our local paper for a school reunion meeting and so I went along with a great deal of excitement hoping to meet old school friends. This was the start of my being part of the committee of the Cantabrian Girls Ex Students Association. Since that time I have been the Secretary, Treasurer and now for over ten years the President of the Association.

Written by Merle Chalmers for the Alumni Voices Project -Stories from ex-students.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CHANGES TO CANTABRIAN GIRLS EX-STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION BANK DETAILS

NEW ACCOUNT INFORMATION

NAME OF ACCOUNT: Cantabrian Girls Ex-Students' Association

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 205224665

BSB: 112-879

\$30 for 3 years

Cheques can be sent to our Treasurer:

Ms Gwen Ng
70 Union St
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203

"Stop Press"

We are trying to identify a member who paid their \$20 membership into the St George Bank account on 3 October and gave:
"ICU" and "left school in 1962" as their reference.

If this is you, or if you know who this may be, any response can be sent to my email or to our treasurer's email: gwen.r.ng@gmail.com